



March

March 2017

Pam Schulz, Principal

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the final trimester of the school year. Your child has made huge growth this year. We have multiple ways to look at that growth throughout the year. This can be seen in school work, the relationships that are developed with staff and students, and in the assessments that come up throughout the year. If we look at just one measure of progress, FAST (our fluency screener), as a building you can see the amazing growth of our students. This year between the Fall screener and Winter screener 5% more of our students met the benchmark. This is 26 students or an entire class of students! These results affirm the work you are doing at home reading with your child, the quality instruction in the classrooms, and most especially the hard work of our students. To give you a comparison, the state of Iowa average growth in proficiency from Fall to Winter is 2.6%. We doubled the state average! Great work!!! Keep reading!!!

In the beginning of April we will begin Iowa Assessments with our third – fifth grade students. This is an important assessment, but we know it is only one piece of data that constructs that academic picture of your child. Throughout the year, we see development and maturity in many areas.

Don't forget that the weather in March is never predictable. Please send a jacket with your child everyday – we never know when it is going to be below 60 degrees.

Please check your calendars and mark days that students will not be in session at Wilkins:

March 13 – 17 (Spring Break)
Friday, March 31
Monday, April 24
Monday, May 29

Pamela C. Schulz

Parent reminders:

- *Remember NOT to park in the front area of Wilkins at the end of the day...this area is designated for bus and daycare pick up.
- *PLEASE ONLY TURN RIGHT when exiting the parking lot.
- *STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A CROSSING GUARD, they are not allowed to cross at the driveway entrance. We want all students to be safe and secure!
- *Students should arrive at school at 7:50 a.m. Breakfast students may enter at 7:30 a.m. **Otherwise students should not arrive earlier than 7:40 a.m.** There is no staff supervision until 7:40 a.m.

GRADE LEVEL NEWS



Kindergarten

Kindergartners at Wilkins are making big gains in their learning! They are becoming more independent in their reading and writing each day. Students have learned almost all of the 88 "Rainbow Words." They are using their sight word knowledge in their reading and have been practicing different reading strategies during reading group time. Kindergartners at Wilkins have been learning how to write addition and subtraction problems during math time. They have enjoyed learning about coins, sorting, patterning, calculators, and 3D shapes as well. Students have a great time playing math games with their peers. We look forward to getting into our Animals 2 X 2 science unit beginning in March. It will be very hands on and interesting for the kids!

First Grade

First graders are learning about our country and the patriotic symbols and holidays that represent our country as we read our social studies unit "We Love Our Country". We continue to work in our Journeys reading books, and we have been reading lots of informational texts and doing plenty of writing. We are in unit 5 of Journeys, and we have accomplished so much as readers and writers! In math, we have been doing a lot of learning about shapes and geometry in Unit 7 of Everyday Math. We are also learning about what shapes are polygons and which are not. We continue to review fact families and number boxes. Our PRIDE time at the end of the day is focused on literacy. We have small groups doing "Making Words" and fluency activities using repeated reading while other students do other various writing and reading activities. Still others are working on building their sight word vocabulary. Many of the students are given extra opportunities for additional technology time during PRIDE.

Second Grade

Second graders recently completed a Science unit on Solids and Liquids! They enjoyed all the hands on investigations they got to do. We will begin a unit on Plants and insects after Spring Break. We continue to work on fractions and multiplication in math. Our next unit covers Measurement and Weight. We are beginning Lesson 23 in Journeys and learning many things about, Grammar, Phonics, Fluency and learning new Vocabulary and Spelling words each week. The boys and girls **loved** their Aquatic Experience at the Linn Mar pool. The staff did an excellent job teaching the children about water safety and swimming skills!

Third Grade

Third graders are gearing up for March! In writing, they continue to learn about the different genres and focused on opinion this month. We read, Hey Little Ant. This is a story with a character that has a debate with an ant on whether he should squish the it or not. The ant does a great job of defending himself with reasons why he should live. We did some research about ants then students had to choose a side...squish or not. Their opinion writing included reasons and details to support their opinions. They did a great job! In math, Unit 7 has been covering multiplication and division problems. We appreciate any extra practice that you do at home with them. Flash cards are STILL a great practice for fact fluency. Unit 8 will focus on fractions! In Social Studies, we have been learning about Maps and Globes. The children love learning about the continents and oceans. We would like to thank you for your assistance recording your child's reading minutes each night! As we inch towards spring and our new FAST benchmark, reading at home will be very beneficial. We look forward to seeing you at conferences.

Fourth Grade

Fourth grade students have been working hard since returning from Winter Break. We recently finished Benchmark testing that goes along with our Journeys series. We have been learning how to divide in math and are currently working on fractions. We are taking a break from Science, but when we resume, we will begin learning about Environments. In Social Studies we are learning about the Midwest Region. During this unit we will learn about resources in the region, geography and famous people that have made an impact on this region. Please continue to have students read 20 minutes each night. As hard as it is to believe, conferences are right around the corner; you can sign up online or call the office at 319-447-3380 for help getting signed up! We look forward to visiting with you about the progress your student has made in 4th grade!

Fifth Grade

Fifth grade will be very busy in March. Important information is highlighted below:

Literacy: Our focus for comprehension skills in Unit 5 will be sequencing, theme, cause and effect and main ideas and details. The stories in our shared reading feature historical fiction, narrative nonfiction, and informational text. Opinion writing will be the focus for writing. The Unit 5 Journeys benchmark assessments in reading and writing will take place the first week in April.

Math: Students will continue learning about fractions and ratios in unit 8 from our Everyday Mathematics curriculum. Students will focus on renaming fractions as equivalent fractions, use equivalent names for fractions and mixed numbers to perform operations, multiply fractions and mixed numbers, estimating and calculating a percent of a number and divide fractions with visual methods. After Spring Break, students will be learning about coordinates, area, volume, and capacity in Unit 9. Students will work with coordinate graphs, extend area concepts and develop a formula for volume and consider capacity relationships.

Science: 5C and 5D will complete the Living Systems Foss Science Kit. The following investigations will be covered: Investigation 1: Systems--- Students investigate everyday systems, the Earth system and recycling. Investigation 2: Nutrient Systems—Students investigate yeast nutrition, plant nutrition and animal nutrition. Investigation 3: Transport Systems—Students investigate plant vascular systems, circulatory systems and respiratory systems. Investigation 4: Sensory Systems—Students investigate stimulus/response, attention, sound off, instinct and learning and ecosystems.

5W will complete the Sun, Moon and Planets Foss Science Kit. The following investigations will be covered: Investigation 1: Sun and Earth---Students investigate shadow shifting, Sun tracking and day and night. Investigation 2: Earth's Moon---Students investigate night-sky observations, how big and how far, and phases of the Moon. Investigation 3: Solar System---Students investigate Solar System cards and gravity. Investigation 4: Patterns in the Sky---Students investigate star patterns and will study stars.

Social Studies: We will begin our study of The Thirteen Colonies. The New England Colonies will be the focus in Chapter 5 of Unit 3. Students will focus on how early English settlements in North America grew to become thriving colonies. Students will also learn about the similarities and differences in those colonies.



NO SCHOOL
March 13th - March 17th
Spring Break

News from the Music Room March '17

MUSIC MATTERS!



Congratulations to the 5th Grade for an AWESOME performance of their musical, "Let's Jam! It's Our Band"! They did a terrific job of presenting their concert for the school on February 23!

The second grade concert is coming up March 23. You won't want to miss "Stone Soup"! This is a great story with a wonderful message and fun songs! Please have your child at the school by 6:15 and meet in the Gym.

Looking ahead to April, the Chorus will be going on a field trip on Friday, April 14 from 8:00 - 11:30. Chorus students need to wear their Chorus shirt and black pants to school for the concerts that will be a part of the morning. We will be singing for the Volunteer Appreciation at Wilkins, and then singing at the High School for two of the upperclassman choirs, and then off to Summit Pointe. We will return to school on time for lunch.

The final Chorus concert of the year will be Thursday, April 18 at 6:30 PM. The Wilkins 5th grade orchestra will also be a part of this concert.

- ♫ **Tuesday, April 25** Chorus sings at Chick-Fil-A for Wilkins Spirit Night between the hours of 5-8PM 217 Collins Road NE
Meet at 6:15
6:30 Sing
When you mention "WILKINS" at the register, a portion of sales from that order will be given to our school.

The last concert of the year will be Kindergarten on Thursday, April 20 at 6:30. The theme is called "Friends and Family".

Wilkins is exciting to be hosting Opera Iowa on Thursday, March 2. We are excited to see the new production of "Jack and the Beanstalk". Special thanks goes out to the Linn-Mar Foundation as well as Farmers State Bank for providing funding to make this possible. We are going to go all out for the Opera and have FANCY DAY where the students can dress up in fancy clothes to watch the opera.

Congratulations to Wilkins seven students who were a part of the East Central Iowa 5th & 6th Grade Honors Choir. This event had over 200 students in the choir who meet for the day at Coe College under the direction of Mrs. Jenn Walker (Novak Elementary). The honors choir was held January 27. Congratulations to the students who worked hard to be involved in this fantastic event: Kelsey Barr, Tavia Randall, Ella Reynolds, Danica Kallas, Novarra Staley, Ella Thompson, and Webber Zehr!

Attention Parents ~ PTO Opportunities:



**PTO
Coming
Together
to make a
Difference!**

Finance Committee will begin meeting in April. If you would like to be on the committee, please contact Shannon Hampson at shannonhampson@yahoo.com.

There are multiple board member positions open for the 2017-18 school year. If you are interested in hearing more, please contact Kim Geistkemper at kgeistke@gmail.com



PTO Events

SKATE NIGHT AT SUPER SKATE

5100 Northland Ave, NE

Cedar Rapids, IA

Saturday, March 4

4:00-6:00 PM

Sponsored by Wilkins PTO

Cost is \$6.50 per skater at the door

Door prize drawings



Wilkins Day & Night at Louie's Scoreboard Sports Bar & Grill

740 10th Street, Marion

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mrs. Jackson will be there from 5:30-7:00 PM



Lunch or dinner—dine in only

Mention Wilkins for 10% back to the Wilkins PTO

Be sure to check out the game area for the kids and the kids menu.



Join us on Tuesday, March 28 from 5:00 – 7:00PM

Wendy's—190 Collin Rd NE, Cedar Rapids



10% of all sales from 5:00-7:00 PM will go to Wilkins PTO

Visit us at the Wilkins PTO table for treat



From the Reading Team

(Mrs. Dalton, Mrs. Gostonczik, Mrs. Tomash,
Mrs. Wells & Mrs. Brown)

Happy Spring, Everyone! ☺

We look forward to sharing our reading progress with you at your child's conference. Enjoy spring break with your families, but please don't take a break from reading with your child. If they resist reading with you, try spicing up the routine! If it is nice enough outside, take your book and a blanket outside. If you are traveling, please make sure you pack a book. Set up a family reading time where EVERYONE READS SOMETHING (magazine, newspaper, book, cookbook, etc.) When kids see you read, they see the value, purpose, and FUN that reading can bring to our days! ☺



Calendar

March 4th.....	PTO Skate Night 4:00pm - 6:00pm
March 6 th	Board Of Education Meeting 5:00pm work session/7:00pm regular session
March 7th.....	Late Night Conferences
March 7th	Book Fair 2:45pm - 7:00pm
March 10th.....	Beach Day
March 13 th - March 17 th	Spring Break
March 21st.....	PTO Louie Scoreboard fundraiser donations go to Wilkins
March 22nd	Spring Picture Day
March 23 rd	Volunteer Workshop 8:30 2 nd Grade Music Program 6:30pm
March 24 th	Linn-Mar Mane Event 6:00pm
March 28 th	PTO fundraiser Gettogether at Wendy's 5:00 - 7:00pm 10% of sales goes to Wilkins
March 31 st	No school - K - 5 Comp Day

Attention Parents/Guardians of incoming 6th Graders

What: Parent Only Meeting

When: Thursday, April 6th at 7:00pm

Where: Excelsior Middle School Cafeteria

It's not too late to begin thinking about the 2017-18 school year. Our Student Services Staff would like to invite you to a meeting to introduce you to the Excelsior Middle School. The following topics will be discussed at this meeting:

- *Curriculum-required courses, exploratory classes, performance music
- *PowerSchool information, Grades, and Grading
- *Co-curricular activities
- *Instructional teams
- *Student expectations
- *Future dates/events of importance

Please come with questions. If you are unable to attend this meeting, please feel free to view the PowerPoint on Excelsior's Web page. The PowerPoint will be posted AFTER the meeting is held. Sixth grade orientation is in early August. Parents will be receiving a letter in the mail from Excelsior with all the information soon.

Iowa Assessment News from the Guidance Counselor

The third, fourth, and fifth grade students will be taking the Iowa Assessments in the beginning of April. The test is no longer Iowa Test of Basic Skills and is now called Iowa Assessment. Teachers will be talking with students about the tests that will be given in their classroom.

You can help, too. As always it is essential students get plenty of sleep (8-10 hours) and eat a good breakfast during this week. Being tired and hungry can distract a child from doing his/her best work. Please call 447-3380 or 447-3383 if you have any questions.

Nick Mohwinkle,-Guidance Counselor



